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God Meets Us in Bed

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GOD MEETS US IN BED

Chris Morgan

Nota bene - The following is a homily for the Second Sunday of Lent. It follows the lectionary readings for that day: Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Philemon 3:17-4:1; and Luke 9:28b-36.

Today's readings tell me that God meets us in bed.

BED

How do you see this place where you lay your head?

For some, like Abram and Sarai, it reminds them of their unfulfilled desire to conceive. Others, like the disciples, collapse with exhaustion after a hike or a long day of work or study.

Maybe you haven't thought about it very much.

What is your evening routine? your morning routine?

Some sleep on a floor. Others, behind the church.

Maybe you and your husband have plenty of real estate on your king size mattress.

Maybe you spend a lot of time crafting it: the sheets and decor, the lighting and smells,

Maybe it's simply a utilitarian location to be used.

It can be a place where people cry out to God, in thanksgiving, and in agony.

It's a place where we meet people in hospitals.
God wants to encounter you there.

Maybe there's more than one place.
Your place and a friend's place.
A camping mattress on a mountainside.
A hammock in the caribbean
Maybe it's a place of comfort for you, a refuge for you when you're
sick or down on life.
Maybe you haven't felt safe there ever since a traumatic experience.
How do you see the place where you lay your head at night?
What relationships intersect there?
What are the sighs, the phone calls, the screens you experience?
God wants to encounter you there.

The Psalms mention the word, "bed" six times. In Psalm 6, the bed is
drenched with the psalmist's tears as he cries out to God for healing.
In Psalm 63, the psalmist gives emphatic thanksgiving from her bed
for God's steadfast love and bountiful providence.

Over the ages, dawn and dusk have been considered quite a vulnerable
time, and I think we could easily confirm that in our lives. Our
rational minds aren't always at their highest functioning. It can be
difficult to deal with other people. It was for this reason that people
created traditions to respond to these vulnerable moments. These
are special times when we look to God for care and defense. I'm
reminded of the long tradition of praying the psalms in the morning
and the evening. Many people call on Jesus as the good shepherd,
as the night guardian. Jesus sleeps in that doorway between day and
night for us, and guards against the thief. Finally, the imagery of
Psalm 23 comes to mind. Let's take up those moments when we go to
sleep and wake up.

GOING TO SLEEP

When I read today's first reading, I imagine Abram in bed, unable to fall asleep, bringing God the questions of his heart. In response, God brings Abram out into the darkness and points to the only light available. In order to make an impression, God encounters Abram in bed, points him to the stars, and restores his confidence in God's promise.

What are the concerns that keep you up late at night? And how has God responded?

Call on God in your dark moments. Just as God met Abram in his bed, God will also encounter you there.

WAKING UP

"Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake, they saw his glory..."

They became fully awake. For those disciples crashing on the side of the mountain, they miss God's revelation until they wake up. They were called out of bed by what they saw. Then they seek to savor it. So there they were, the Law and the Prophets represented by Moses and Elijah and Jesus as their fulfillment. Who knows what they heard exactly, but it got them out of bed. And when they saw the experience coming to an end, Peter made a move to keep it going.

When you do wake up, what do you do? What do your relationships ask of you? Do you go to God in praise of creation, in pursuit of relationship? What else do you do? How do your relationships call you to act in the time between rolling out of bed and fully waking up? What does your experience of God today call forth in you?

This morning, we, like the disciples, have a chance to experience the true presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist we share. Let us savor it, but like that day of the Transfiguration, let us not stay here.

Let us not keep our relationship with God in the church building or on the top of this mountain. Let us take what we experience here to encourage us, to confirm in us the faith we've been given, and take it out to the rest of our world. May we encounter God in our beds, when we go to sleep and when we wake up, and may this experience help us to live fully awake in the light of Christ.